



**STATEMENT BY DR. ARJUN KARKI, PRESIDENT OF LDC WATCH
AT THE INFORMAL INTERACTIVE HEARINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WITH
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND
THE PRIVATE SECTOR ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF
ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR
THE DECADE 2001 - 2010**

**United Nations Headquarters
22 June 2006, New York**

Mr. President,

UN High Representative for LDCs Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury
Excellencies, NGOs, CSOs and Private Sector delegates

It is my great pleasure to be a part of these Hearings today and I would like to extend my thanks to the President of the General Assembly for his support and co-operation in bringing together this global gathering to address the international community's commitments affecting 12 per cent of the world's population who live in the world's poorest enclaves. Those of us here today represent a vital and integral part of the global community which has vowed to eradicate poverty and work to ensure that every woman, man and child is able to exercise the basic rights and enjoy the true meaning of life. Most of us come from those countries, while others share the concerns and aspirations to meet the goals. Today is a great opportunity for us to share a common space and to make our voices heard - an opportunity to review our past; our achievements, our failures, and an opportunity to reconstruct and reaffirm our path towards the urgent cause of eradicating poverty, achieving sustainable development and creating an enabling environment for peace, justice and dignity.

Five years ago the international community adopted the Brussels Programme of Action. While we welcomed the commitments made, we criticized the outcome for lacking the ambition needed to address the problems facing the LDCs. We considered the outcome as being a minimum obligation for the international community.

Five years later, as we review the first half of the targeted decade, the scenario looks just as bleak as it was in 2001. To understand the impact of this failure we need to look at the impact on those living in poverty, and not just the statistics that show our failure. Once again, we must address these failures to deliver on the repeated commitments made time and again. We must recognize the stark reality that if the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are not achieved in the LDCs then they cannot be achieved overall. It is also certain that targets for poverty eradication and sustainable development cannot be met without a clear focus on the special constraints, concerns and potentials of the LDCs.

Already plagued by natural disasters, conflicts and geographical constraints, the LDCs are further subjected to the ever growing waves of globalization and its devastating fallout still marginalizes the people of LDCs leading to perpetual poverty, injustice, indebtedness and underdevelopment. It is therefore necessary to see that globalization, by continually increasing the interdependence among nations, has made the development process much more complicated and even lopsided. The result is that the rich gets richer and the poor poorer. Inequality is increased, not diminished. We still lack a pro-poor vision, a pro-people perspective, in our development efforts. Let us remind ourselves that development is not just about need but about human rights as adopted by the General Assembly twenty years ago in its Declaration on the Right to Development. This calls for the protection and promotion of the right to development, particularly for those who are discriminated and marginalized by the dominant systems in this globalized world including women, children, indigenous people and ethnic minorities. This requires pro-active action from the international community as a whole, including the commitment of significantly mobilizing more resources to tackle the explicit and implicit vulnerabilities of the LDCs as well as the pre- and the post-conflict challenges inherent in fragile communities.

Against the gloomy progress in the development of LDCs, and recognizing the fact that the Brussels Programme of Action acknowledges the vital role that civil society has to play in its implementation and follow-up, LDC Watch believes that civil society inputs and interventions will be crucial to ensure a thorough assessment of the progress, if any, in the implementation of the Programme of Action. It is also committed to devising effective and appropriate campaign, lobbying and advocacy strategies to make governments and other actors live up to their promises. **In this context today, LDC Watch reiterates its demands made at the recent Benin Ministerial meeting of the LDCs and urges all Governments and development partners to commit and deliver on the following civil society calls:**

- ✓ We call for greater transparency and accountability in policy and decision making process with an emphasis on pro-poor and pro-people vision. Adequate representation and participation of women and other vulnerable groups including the oppressed and the excluded minorities in policy and decision making is imperative. We call for accountability and democratization of national governments, International Financial Institutions and the World Trade Organization to give a greater space to the LDCs, as well as within the UN system. We want strong governments in LDCs that are responsive and accountable to their own people and not in terms of authority and coercion.
- ✓ We call for total and unconditional debt cancellation simply because, we just don't owe, as all these debts are illegitimate. In fact, we've already been compelled to pay back multifold and it is us who are entitled to recompense in return. Mere debt cancellation is not enough.
- ✓ We call for fair trading rules that do not discriminate but favour positively and realistically the interests of LDCs, and which recognizes the central role played by women in production and trade, as the current system is lopsided and favours industrialized countries only. Trade liberalization, aid for trade, export dumping and many bilateral trade agreements only make poor countries further indebted and poorer. None of today's industrialized countries built their economies under such conditions. On the contrary their very foundation was achieved behind protective screens and materials plundered from the colonies.
- ✓ We call for greater prioritization of LDCs as the beneficiaries of capacity building programmes. Demand driven and responsive initiatives need to be encouraged, based on principles of gender justice and equality, so that we can benefit from our investments and even generate our own wealth. We also believe in providing greater importance to, and investment in, the health and education sectors as they are fundamental components that facilitate development.

Lastly, we all very well know that every partner in development has a crucial and a supportive role to play and I would like to end by reiterating that only a pro-poor and pro-people approach by all would best benefit that role.

Thank you.